### Sabbath and Adventist Identity





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#### What's in a Name

- Roman Catholic Church
- Greek Orthodox Church
- Southern Baptist Church
- Anglican Church
- Norwegian Lutheran Church
- **Mennonite** Church
- Seventh-day Adventist Church

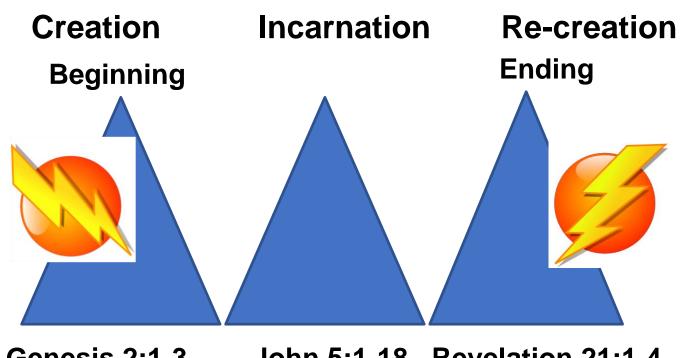
### **Questions**

- 1. Is the Sabbath, as theology or as practice, best seen as a divine *commandment* or as a divine *commitment*?
- 2. Is the Sabbath, as theology or as practice, in Seventh-day Adventist representations a divine *commandment* or a divine *commitment*?

## **SABBATH:** What's the Point

- 1. Commandment (Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15)
- 2. Commitment (Gen. 2:1-3; John 5:1-18; 9:1-41)

### Sabbath as Divine Commitment



John 5:1-18 Revelation 21:1-4 **Genesis 2:1-3** 

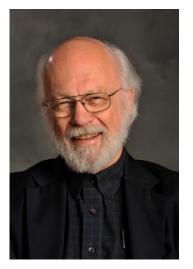


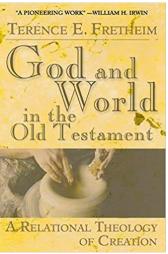
## Sabbath at the Source

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation (Gen 2:1-3).

#### Sabbath at the Source

- A story of what God did (in the indicative); not a commandment of what we are expected to do (no imperative).
- 2. More than a memorial—*presence*.
- 3. Proof of God's *commitment*.





### Memorial or Presence

"By resting on the seventh day, God is thereby shown to have entered into the time of the created order."

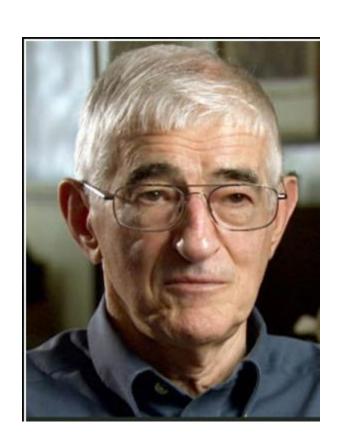
Terence Fretheim, God and the World in the Old Testament, 63.



#### **Memorial or Commitment**

## God "adopts the community of creation as his own milieu."

Jürgen Moltmann, God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation (London: SCM Press, 1985), 279.



#### **Divine Commitment**

"We humans are not the climax of creation. We are the work of a late Friday afternoon, and no one does one's best work on a late Friday afternoon—possibly not even God? No, the climax of creation is the Sabbath, when 'on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done..." - John Dominic Crossan, "Divine Violence in the Christian Bible," in *The Bible and the American Future*, ed. Robert Jewett (Eugene: Cascade, 2009), 211.



Commitment for the Good of All

"Indeed, as we shall see, the Sabbath is about the just distribution of God's creation to all God's creatures so Sabbathas-Justice is, indeed, the very character of God as externally revealed. Second, in that all-perfect dawn world, no blood is ever to be spilt upon the sacred earth of creation."

- Crossan, "Divine Violence in the Christian Bible," 211.



#### 1. At the Source

(Gen. 2:1-3): commitment

#### 2. In Transit

(Isa. 56:1-8): <u>commitment</u>

#### 3. At the Zenith

(John 5:1-18; 9:1-41):

???



### Most Important Sabbath Texts in the Bible

- John 5:1-18 Healing of the paralytic
- ➤ John 9:1-41
  Healing of the man born blind



## Why So Important

- 1. Sabbath meaning
- 2. Clarity in the context of controversy
- 3. Jesus claims the prerogative of defining the meaning of the Sabbath



#### Sabbath and the Mat

- "Stand up, take your <u>mat</u> and walk." (5:8)
- He took up his <u>mat</u> and began to walk (5:9)
- "It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your <u>mat</u>." (5:10)
- "The man who made me well said to me, 'Take up your <u>mat</u> and walk.'" (5:11)



Sabbath and the Mud

- When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes (9:6)
- "The man called Jesus <u>made mud</u>, spread it [the <u>mud</u>] on my eyes" (9:11)
- Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus <u>made the</u> <u>mud</u> and opened his eyes (9:14)
- He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes" (9:15)



## Sabbath Healings: Controversy

#### THEIR VIEW

- Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath (5:16).
- Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath" (9:16).

#### **HIS VIEW**

- But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working" (5:17).
- We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work (John 9:4).

### **Intimacy**

• "My *Father* is working until now . . . " (5:17)

### **Imitation**

• "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing" (5:19)

### **Identity**

• but [he] was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself *equal to God* (5:18).

#### **Genesis**

"God rested on the seventh day"





#### John

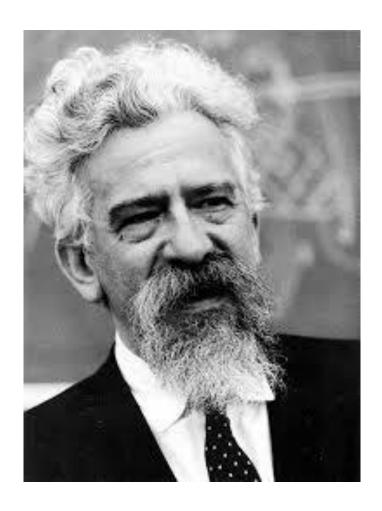
"My Father is working until now and I am also working"

**WORK** 

## At the Zenith: Sabbath as Divine Commitment



- 1. At the Source (Gen. 2:1-3) commitment
- 2. In Transit
  (Isa. 56:1-8):
  commitment
- 3. At the Zenith (John 5:1-18; 9:1-41): commitment



#### Commitment

"To the biblical mind, however, labor is the means toward an end, and the Sabbath as a day of rest, as a day of abstaining from toil, is not for the purpose of recovering one's lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labor. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life."

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York Noonday,1951), 14.



**Man with a Hoe** Jean-François Millet 1860 - 1862

## THE COMMITMENT IN THE COMMANDMENT

But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work-- you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you (Deut. 5:14)

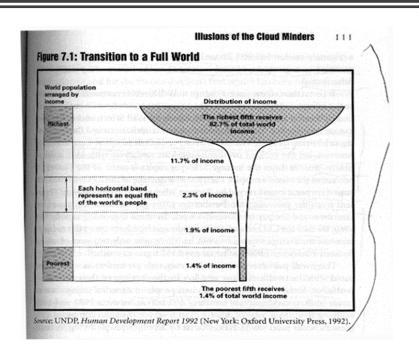


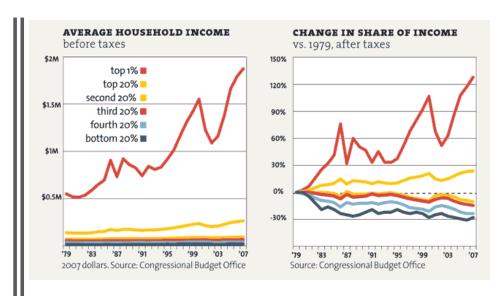
#### **SABBATH ECONOMICS**

#### LOST MEANING

Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat" (Amos 8:4-6)

## **Income Distribution** in the 'Days of Amos'





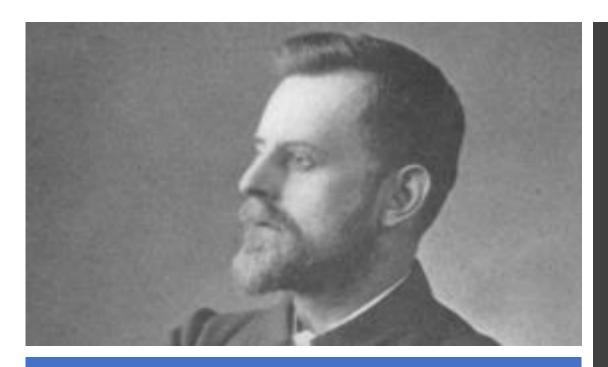
### Sabbath Times: Right or Rite

Amos delivered a devastating diatribe against the nation's distorted panacea of the cult—the opium of the masses . . . Ritual can never be a surrogate for ethics. "God desires devotion, not devotions," right more than rite. When the cult became a substitute for moral behavior, it was severely denounced and condemned.

Shalom Paul and Frank M. Cross, Amos, 2.







**Sabbatarian Ethics: Choosing Sides** 

"And, as in every other relevant passage of the Old Testament, we have the interest of the Sabbath bound up in the same cause with the interests of the poor. The Fourth Commandment enforces the day of rest on behalf of the servants and bondsmen . . . The interests of the Sabbath are the interests of the poor: the enemies of the Sabbath are the enemies of the poor." - George Adam Smith, *The Twelve Prophets*, (New York, 1928), 190.

## **COMMITMENT:**Sabbath and the Earth

	CALENDAR	ECOLOGY
SABBATH	WEEKLY	CESSATION
SABBATICAL YEAR	EVERY 7 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR	CESSATION
JUBILEE	EVERY 50 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR	CESSATION

#### "MAKING UP FOR ITS SABBATHS"

He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill seventy years (2 Chr. 36:20-21).



### SABBATH AS RESISTANCE

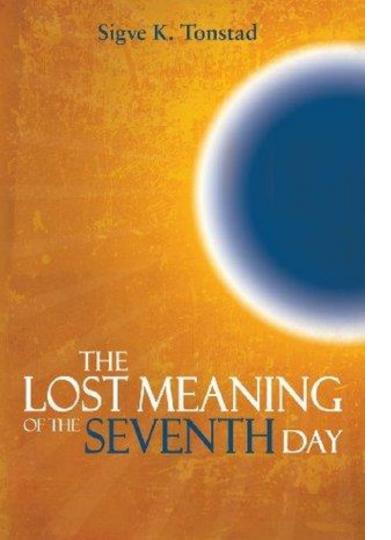
- "How strange to use the most airtime at the mountain on the Sabbath command" (Sabbath as Resistance, 27).
- "People who keep Sabbath live all seven days differently" (p. 43).
- "Sabbath is for honoring the land . . . Landed people are tempted to create a sabbathless society in which land is never rested, debts are never canceled, slaves are never released . . ."

Brueggemann, *The Land*, p. 60.



Sabbath as Divine Commitment "The Sabbath in the time of the first creation links this world and the world to come. It is the presence of God in the time of those he has created or, to put it more precisely, the dynamic presence of eternity in time, which links beginning and end, thus awakening remembrance and hope.

– Jürgen Moltmann, The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology (London: SCM Press, 1995), 266.



## Sabbath as Divine Commitment

 If the orientation of the seventh day from the beginning oscillates between memory and hope, between the reality of Paradise Lost and the prospect of Paradise Regained, the oscillation of hope is stronger than the oscillation of memory.

Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*, 59.